

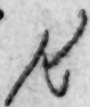
The Doctrines of ELECTION, and FINAL
PERSEVERANCE stated from Scripture, and
shewn consistent with exhortatory and practical
Preaching, and conducive to holiness of Life.

A
S E R M O N

PREACHED AT THE
L O C K - C H A P E L,
NOVEMBER 26th, 1786.

BY THOMAS SCOTT,

MORNING PREACHER AT THE LOCK-CHAPEL.



L O N D O N.

Printed by C. WATTS, Queen-Street, Grosvenor-Square; and
Sold by J. JOHNSON, No. 72, in St. Paul's Church-Yard; J. MAT-
THEWS, No. 18, Strand; at the AUTHOR'S, Chapel-Street; and at
the Lock-CHAPEL.

M DCC LXXXVI.

[Price SIXPENCE.]

TO THE
CONGREGATION
AT THE
LOCK CHAPEL,
THIS
SERMON

IS RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED,

BY THEIR UNWORTHY,

BUT WILLING SERVANT

IN THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST,

THE AUTHOR.

TO THE

CONGREGATION

AT THE

LOCK CHAPEL

THIS

SERMON

is respectfully inscribed,

By their unworthy

But willing servant

In the Gospel of CHRIST,

THE AUTHOR.

S E R M O N, &c.

JOHN VI. 37—40.

All that the Father giveth me, shall come unto me; and him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out.

For I came down from Heaven, not to do mine own Will, but the Will of him that sent me.

And this is the Father's Will, which hath sent me, that of all, which he hath given me, I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day.

And this is the Will of him that sent me, that every one, which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting Life, and I will raise him up at the last day.

THE holy Scriptures, being the Word of God, must needs be perfectly consistent. Moses and Samuel, David and Isaiah, Paul and James, being merely the amanuenses of the holy Ghost, must perfectly harmonize. Precepts, threatnings, warnings, judgments, counsels, exhortations, invitations, promises, privileges, histories, examples, types, and parables, all centre in one point, and in divers methods subserve the same great end. All agree in certain grand out-lines: all draw, and illustrate the same character of God, and of
B man:

man: impress the same ideas of sin, and of holiness, of time and of eternity, of happiness and of misery: and all concur in displaying the glory of the divine perfections in his dispensations of providence in this world, and his final distribution of rewards and punishments in the world to come. And though each of these constituent parts of holy writ answer not the same purposes, each has its distinct important use in the accomplishment of one vast and uniform design.

BUT tho' Scripture be in itself thus compleatly harmonious; yet man doth not readily perceive this harmony. Many imagine they see numerous inconsistencies and contradictions therein. Others judging it impracticable to reconcile the sacred penmen; according to their peculiar sentiments, give a partial preference to one above another, and set them in opposition to each other. Each sect or party professing Christianity, appeals to Scripture in proof of their discordant tenets. And multitudes, content with those passages, which seem to speak the language of some favorite system, pass over all the rest, as if nothing to the purpose, or nothing to them, a mere * *caput mortuum* in Divinity.

THESE things are notorious: but whence do they arise? We must allow, that the vastness of the design revealed in Scripture, which has relation to things unseen and eternal, and to the perfections of the incomprehensible God, must

* The worthless insipid mass that remains when the spirits are all drawn off by distillation. Or the *mere dross*, which is left in refining metals.

needs exceed the capacity of our narrow minds, and cannot enter the understanding at once, nor be apprehended at one glance. Thus viewed in parts, the unity is broken, and the harmony obscured. Infomuch that we may justly question whether any creature can perfectly comprehend the consistency of this glorious plan, "which Angels desire to look down into." But there are other reasons of this difficulty. The Bible is a revelation from God to *Sinners*; and it seems an apparent intention of the holy Ghost, so to arrange and constitute this revelation, as to make trial of men's spirits; and to distinguish betwixt the humble teachable enquirer who reads to learn the way of salvation; and such as read the Scriptures with captious self-sufficiency, to start objections; with attachment to a party, to find weapons of angry controversy; or with a worldly and sensual mind, to find excuse for their lusts. The "*way-faring* man, tho' a fool shall not err therein." But the Lord "taketh the wise in their own craftiness." And "if any receive not the LOVE OF THE TRUTH, "that they might be saved; for *this cause* God "shall send them strong delusion, that they should "believe a lye; that they might all be damned, "who believe not the truth, but had pleasure in "unrighteousness."* "And" saith Christ unto his Disciples, "unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God; but unto them, "that are without, all these things are done in "parables, that seeing they might see and not "perceive, and hearing they may hear and not un-

* 2 Theff. ii. 10—12.

“derstand, lest at any time they should be converted, and their sins be forgiven them.” * My Brethren, let us pray for an humble teachable spirit, which will more avail in understanding the Scriptures to the good of our own souls, than all the acuteness and learning in the world: in proportion as we are of this temper, and really love truth and holiness, we shall escape these dangers, and perceive more and more the consistency of the word of God.

BUT as these things are imperfect, and counteracted by remaining prejudice and corruption in the best of men; therefore we none of us perceive all that consistency, which really subsists in divine revelation.—This satisfactory discovery however of the harmony of Scripture is doubtless a good test of the degree, in which we really understand divine things: and ever since I have made the Bible my peculiar study, (which is now near twelve years) this discovery of consistency in Scripture has been my invariable object. Nor could any arguments procure my assent to the doctrine of Justification by Faith in Christ alone: until I was satisfied of its perfect agreement with the honour of the divine law, and the indispensable necessity of personal holiness, and fruitfulness in good works, which I was sure were in the Bible every where insisted on. In like manner my objections to the doctrines of personal election and final perseverance were insuperable, till I was fully satisfied of their consistency, with exhortations, warnings, invitations, and persuasions

* Compare Mark iv. 12, 13. Matt. xiii. 13, 14, 15. John xii. 40, 41. Acts xxviii. 25, 26, 27. with Isaiah vi. 9, 10.

on the ministers part ; and diligence, watchfulness, and strenuous exertions on the peoples ; which I was, and am sure, are far more spoken of in Scripture, than these doctrines themselves. At that time, which is nine years ago, I was ignorant of the sentiments of *modern* Calvinists : and since that period I am not sensible that any material alteration has taken place in my views of these doctrines, by all I have seen, heard, or read.

WHAT those views are I judge myself called upon more fully to declare from the pulpit and the press : that is, I consider it my duty at present to lay before you, and the public, the substance of the doctrine I have preached to you, and shall probably preach, as long as the providence of God continues me among you. I say *probably*, for I trust I am open to conviction, and desirous of instruction : and tho' groundless clamours, and slanderous accusations, will not, I hope, influence me : yet possibly some person may point out somewhat erroneous, and unscriptural in this statement of my sentiments : and whether he do it publicly or privately, as a friend, or an enemy, provided he convinces my judgment that I have been mistaken ; he shall certainly have my thanks and public acknowledgments for so doing.

I have in this view chosen a very copious text, but neither intend to enter particularly into the *minutiæ* of explanation ; nor to confine myself closely to it ; but according to the following simple plan and method to advert to a variety of other Scriptures as I proceed.—

1. I observe from the text, that Christ came
down

down from heaven to execute the Father's commission.

II. That this commission hath a special reference to those, whom the Father had given him.

III. That all these shall come to Christ, and none else will.

IV. That he will most certainly receive all that come to him.

V. That his commission reaches to the infallible and everlasting salvation of the body and soul of every one, who are given to him, and see him and believe in him.*

And VI. That all this is perfectly consistent with many things which some Calvinists in our day object to, and call Arminianism. This will naturally close with a brief application.—And may God the Spirit open all our understandings and hearts, to understand and receive his truth; and bless this design to the edification and establishment of many souls; and the promoting of true godliness within us, amongst us, and around us.—

I. CHRIST came down from Heaven to execute the Father's commission. "I came down from Heaven, not to do my own Will, but the Will of him, that sent me." One would suppose this expression, "I came down from Heaven," would create considerable difficulty to those, who look

* Another expression for the same thing: Coming to him, is seeing, (not by the bodily eye, but by the mental perception, by an enlightened understanding) the suitableness, freeness, and desirableness of Christ as a Saviour, and so believing his testimony, as to apply to him, and depend on him for salvation.

upon

upon Christ as a mere man, that never was in Heaven, before his ascension. But criticism in the hands of an ingenious man is a very magic wand, and nothing can stand before it. It were however to be wished, that this mode of interpretation had been conceded, as it were by monopoly, to the Socinians: and never disgraced their writings, who call Jesus their Lord, and God, and profess to trust in him alone for salvation. Oh! when will men shew reverence to the oracles of God, and suppose that the holy Ghost dictates proper language, which need not be tortured from its plain meaning in the cause of truth; whatever the interest of a party may require?

BUT let this hint suffice: we are I trust otherwise minded as to the divinity of Christ. We profess at least to believe, "that he was in the form of God, and thought it no robbery to be equal with God: but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of servant, and was made in the likeness of man." Originally he was no servant, therefore no creature: (for all holy creatures must be the servants of God); but condescended to assume that character along with human nature. In this character he acted on earth, and doth and shall act in heaven 'till the day of judgment, by commission, and according to instructions. "He came not to do his own Will, but the Will of him that sent him": In which he is not only our Saviour, but hath left us an example, that we should follow his steps.

WE are not to suppose there can be any opposition betwixt the Will of the Father and that of the Son. But he then appeared as man, and intimates
that

that he acted not by human partiality, but according to the counsel of God. 'Tis moreover the language of accommodation to our infirmities, and serves to obviate our misapprehensions.

BUT what is the general purport of this commission? Let us hear the word of God. "It is a true saying, and worthy of *all* men to be received, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners." "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world thro' him might be saved." "His blood is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but for the sins of the whole world."* Had the penmen of the Scriptures been of the sentiments with, and as *nice* in systematical consistency as many moderns, they would never have thus expressed themselves. For my part, I will use none of the above-mentioned arts of criticism to narrow the meaning of such texts. And as I hope this day, previous to receiving and administering the Lord's Supper, in solemn prayer, to use these words, Christ "by his own oblation of himself once offered, made a full, perfect and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world." I dare no more contradict this solemn profession from the pulpit, than preach against the seventeenth article (that respects predestination) which I have subscribed.—The compilers of our

* See also, 1 Tim. ii. 5, 6. — John i. 29.

Liturgy evidently thought both true, and consistent with each other, and I am happy to coincide in sentiment with these venerable characters; as at least it vindicates me from the charge of novelty; and were it otherwise I must for conscience sake leave my station in the church of England.* There are reasons, why none but the elect can finally be benefited by the death of Christ; yet those reasons relate to the application not the purchase of redemption. And there is a sense of vast importance in which it may be said, and the holy Ghost hath said it, "that his blood is the propitiation for the sins of the whole world." In this I pray you suspend your judgment, and hear me patiently.

BREVITY requires me to suppress many things; And to observe in general, that the *main* (tho' not the only) object of Christ's appearing in human nature, and living so many years a holy sufferer, and dying in unknown agonies on the cross, was to bring in everlasting righteousness, and make pro-

* It is very well worth observation, that the Liturgy of the Church of England, though evidently Calvinistical, and compiled by known Calvinists; is most pointedly opposite to Antinomianism. The conclusion of the general Thanksgiving, much of the Litany, and innumerable other passages might be adduced in illustration of this observation. But the Collect for the day when this Sermon was preached, is so directly apposite to the subject, that I shall beg leave to insert a part of it.— "Stir up, O Lord, we beseech thee the *Wills* of thy faithful people, that they *plenteously* bringing forth the fruit of good Works, may of thee be *plenteously* rewarded."— It is much wondered that Socinians, Arians, or Arminians can subscribe our Articles, or use our Liturgy. It must be equally admirable if any Antinomians can.

pitiation for iniquity ; as preparatory to his mediatory office in heaven, and his intercession for sinners. The perfection of his arduous obedience, and the intenseness of his complicated sufferings were doubtless of indispensable necessity, and of vast efficacy in this plan of redemption. But it was the union of the *Deity* with the man Christ Jesus in one mysterious person, which stamped it's full value on this sacrifice for sin. And can any man, who believes the proper divinity of Christ, hesitate to pronounce it an *infinite* ransom ? Infinite honour was by such an obedience done the divine law ; and infinite satisfaction made to divine justice by such a sacrifice.* And thro' this infinite sufficiency that hindrance, which arose from the perfect holiness, and righteousness of God, and the inconceivable demerit of sin, is thereby once for all entirely removed : Nor would it be any impeachment of the purity of the divine character ; any deduction from the honour of his law ; or any abatement of the horror and hatred, which we should conceive against sin, 'tho' God should thro' Christ pardon all the sinners, who now do, or ever shall live on earth.

* Even Calvin himself writes thus on Rom. 5. 18. " He (the Apostle) maketh it the common grace of all men, because it is proposed to all, not, because it is actually extended to all. For altho' Christ suffered for the sins of the whole world ; and is *offered* indiscriminately to all men, by the goodness of God ; yet all do not apprehend him." And on John II. 2. " Christ suffered *sufficiently* for the whole world ; but *efficaciously* only for the elect."—And indeed if human authority availeth any thing, I can easily adduce abundance of evidence of that kind, when 'tis necessary, from the most respectable Calvinistic divines.

IN love, passing knowledge, the Redeemer having executed this part of his commission, rises, and ascends into heaven, there in glory at the Father's right hand, to complete the grand design; and hath all power, and authority in heaven and earth, and all the fullness of the spirit at his disposal for this purpose. This design consists in pardoning, sanctifying, defending, and bringing to perfect holiness and felicity, all, who come to God thro' him.—But this leads us to the

II. Thing to be considered.

THAT this commission has a special reference unto those, whom the Father hath given to him.—

THOUGH there be no remaining hindrance from divine justice to the salvation of any, or every sinner: yet there may be an hindrance equally insuperable from another quarter; namely from man's depravity.—The sun is created, and placed in the open firmament for the common benefit of mankind: there is in that luminary no defect of light, nor would be, were innumerable additional millions to partake the benefit. Yet all men do not see, wherefore? not from any hindrance in the sun, but from one in themselves. God, who is no debtor to his creatures, gives the blessing of sight to whom he will: but if he withhold or withdraw it, the man is benighted at noon day.

CHRIST was lifted up upon the cross (like the brazen serpent) and is held forth in the preached Gospel, for “all the ends of the earth to look unto, and be saved.” This in general may be said to be for the common benefit of mankind: there is no defect of merit, of mercy, or of grace in him; nor would be, if millions as numerous

as the sand were to receive out of his fulness. But the want of a disposition of heart, which fallen man has not, which God alone can give, but which he may justly withhold from a rebellious subject, effectually prevents every one's salvation, who receives it not. The case is parallel: except that bodily blindness is no man's sin; but want of humility, spirituality and love of God is sin, original sin, the fruitful parent of all other sin in fallen men, and fallen angels.

SUPPOSE now the blessings of the Gospel fairly proposed with solemn warnings and pressing invitations to two men of exact similarity of character and disposition; left to themselves in similar circumstances, the effect must be the same. But behold! whilst one scorns the gracious offer, the other trembles, weeps, prays, repents, believes! Who maketh this man to differ from the other? or what hath he, "that he hath not received?" The answer properly understood decides the controversy. Depravity produces different effects in vast variety, and gathers strength by habits: But in the root, in its nature it is the same, and equal in all men. This depravity can only be overcome effectually by a new creation, a "work wrought by the exceeding greatness of that mighty power, which raised Christ from the dead." (I am not now arguing with those, who oppose these Doctrines.)

IN the case before us; the man, who scorned the gospel offer, had this work been wrought in his heart by the energy of the holy Ghost, would certainly have embraced it: had the other, who believed, been left to himself, he would as certainly

tainly have rejected it. This distinguishing grace is previously neither deserved nor desired by either of them ; might justly have been withheld from both ; but is graciously communicated to one, and not the other by a sovereign God, "according to the counsel of his own Will." "He and he alone hath made one to differ from another." Now I ask ; was this distinction *intentionally* made, or was it not ? If intentionally ; was that intention first conceived at the moment of execution, or previously ? If previously, why not from eternity ? In short the two doctrines of "mans entire depravity ;" And "of a new creation unto holiness by the sole energy of the holy Ghost, without any help and notwithstanding every hindrance from nature," can never consistently be separated from that of personal election. Nor upon this ground can any other reason be given, why any are saved, and sanctified, but this :* "that God hath chosen us in Christ before the foundation of the world, that we *should* be holy, and without blame before him in love : having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ unto himself, according to the good pleasure of his Will ; to the praise of the glory of his Grace, whereby he hath made us accepted in the beloved ; in whom we have Redemption thro' his Blood, even the forgiveness of our Sins."

"KNOWN unto God are all his works from before the foundation of the world." In his unsearchable judgments ; (Oh how deep are they !) doubtless for wise, and righteous purposes, tho' not

* Ephesians 1. 4. 7 verse.

clearly

clearly discernable by us purblind mortals, he was pleased to permit the first entrance of sin, the fall of Adam, and the depravation of the human race. It suits not my present limits to descant on this subject: I may scarce pause to drop a tear for the awful Catastrophe. But that man is fallen and depraved; that the whole world lieth in wickedness, all we see, all we hear, or read, or experience demonstrates; and confirms the testimony of God in Scripture to this humbling doctrine. Utterly destitute of love to the holy character of God, of desire of his favour and delight in his service, and without gratitude for his benefits, or regard to his glory, man is universally disposed to inordinate idolatrous self-love, and love of worldly objects. His own honour, and glory he seeks, his own imagined excellencies he admires, his crimes he vindicates, or excuses; he affects to be at his own disposal, wishes to be independantly his own carver, and would by his own good will have all others admire, and honour him as much as he does himself. At the same time he also idolizes worldly objects; and "the lusts of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life," he chuses as his portion: these are his good things, for which he most ardently thirsts, on which he mainly depends, and in which he places his chief felicity. Hence eventually proceed all unrighteousness, licentiousness, and ungodliness, according to the different constitutional propensities of different men. The "law of God is weak thro' the flesh," and cannot restrain their impetuous desires: In the pursuit of their self exalting, or carnal projects, the will and worship of God is neglected, the rules of justice,
truth

truth and benevolence violated ; and every excess committed. “ The wrath of God being revealed “ from Heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men ;” and eternal punishment annexed to the transgression of his holy law, by him “ to whom vengeance belongs :” When this is made known to the proud rebel, his neglect, and contempt issues in enmity against the holy character, perfect law, and righteous judgment of God. “ For “ the carnal mind is enmity against God, is not “ subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be ; “ so then, they that are in the flesh *cannot* please “ God.”

THIS state of the human race, God foresaw ; and he who alone is competent to estimate the tendency of such a temper of heart, and the malignity of such a conduct, evidently considered them both as meriting eternal misery, “ and as vessels of “ wrath fitted for destruction.”

REDEMPTION by the blood of Christ was evidently a most distinguished part of his original plan. “ He was the Lamb slain from before the “ foundation of the world.” Whatever other method infinite Wisdom could have devised for his own glory in the salvation of sinners ; this was evidently the best ; for it was actually chosen. But this plan can have no foundation except in this humiliating truth ; that all men, were so exceedingly guilty, and deserving of everlasting misery, that it would have been derogatory to the justice, and holiness of God to have been reconciled unto, or to have rescued any of them from destruction, except thro’ the interposition of such a Sacrifice, as that of “ his “ well beloved Son in whom he was well pleased.”

If

If man deserve not damnation, deliverance from it is not of grace but of debt; * and tho' eternal life must be an unmerited gift of God to any of his creatures, in propriety of language; yet it appears not but it might have been honourably given to us, without any occasion for the death of Christ, had it not been that man was so guilty, and God so holy, that without his atonement, it would not consist with his holiness to save so vile a rebel. If this be not so, "then Christ died in vain."

BUT if the proud, carnal, ungodly heart of sinful man is enmity to a holy God, and disdains the authority, dislikes the precept, and abhors the sentence of his holy Law, which condemns him to eternal punishment for his crimes: And if the Gospel above every thing else, shews the malignity of sin, and the desert of every sinner; if it maintain the authority, magnify the precept, and vindicate the justice of the sentence of the law: And if it give no quarter to any sin, save no man in his sins, but from all sin, and to all that very holiness, which the law demanded, "writing the Law in the heart;" could it be reasonably supposed, that man would not also hate, and quarrel with the Gospel? It might have been previously expected,

* If we could not by other arguments prove the justice of God in the damnation of sinners, the method of Redemption would alone demonstrate it. And it is more our interest, and more becoming us, to submit to his righteousness, and apply for his mercy; than in the midst of our ignorance, and blindness, to spend our time in vain reasonings upon a subject, for which we are incompetent; and making objections to what is unalterably determined, whether we submit to it or not,

and

and matter of fact indisputably proves, that the unadulterated Gospel, notwithstanding it's surprizing largeness, and freeness of grace and love, is more offensive to the proud rebel, than the very law itself, and excites more enmity and blasphemy. Nor need we hesitate to assert that very individual, left to himself, would as infallibly have either neglected, and opposed; or perverted, and abused the Gospel, as they have broken, and quarrelled with the law. Hence all those persecutions of christianity, which in many ages and places have raged: all that indifference and contempt, which in other places have prevailed: and all those innumerable corruptions of christianity, which have been devised to render it more palatable, or tolerable to the pride, or the lusts of men.

FORESEEING this as the inevitable consequence of leaving the Gospel to take it's own course in the world: knowing that all would reject, or abuse it to their condemnation: God did not consider himself bound in *justice* to afford such obstinate enemies any further grace, but judged that he might *righteously* leave them to the consequences of their perverseness. And tho' this was not his plan; yet he deemed it suitable to the high purposes of his glorious kingdom, thus to leave numbers. He is no man's debtor, doth no man injustice, punishes no man, who hath not deserved it, nor above his deservings: and however men may now dare to find fault, it will all be cleared up, and "every mouth will be stopped" at the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, "who will render unto every man according to his works."

D

BUT

BUT where none hath any claim, may he not bestow his unmerited favours on whom he will? "May he not do what he will with his own?" Seeing none either deserving of, or desiring mercy in *his* way; but all hardening themselves in impatient, and obstinate rebellion: in high sovereignty he declares, "I will have mercy, on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom he will have compassion" So then it is not of him that willeth, or of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy."—"For he hath mercy, on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth." Not but that all who are saved, will run and seek; and "every one that seeketh, findeth:" But God's mercy is beforehand with the willing sinner, his preventing grace hath produced this willingness; and therefore he wills, runs, seeks and finds: * whilst others left to themselves and their own lusts, and Satan's temptations, in his righteous Providence meet with those things, which harden them more and more to their destruction.

DOUBTLESS he has reasons for this distinction, but he deigns not to inform us of them; and who are we worms, rebels, and enemies, that we should expect it from him?

WHEN therefore he first appointed his beloved Son (his elect, whom he had chosen) for salvation to the ends of the earth: that his grace might not be frustrated by man's perverseness, (as otherwise it must have been); leaving others under the condemnation of the law, and the tendency of their

* *Work out your own Salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God, which worketh in you to will, and do, of his good pleasure.* Phil. ii. 12, 13.

evil nature to reject the Gospel: "from the beginning he chose" a remnant of all nations, "unto salvation, through sanctification of the spirit, and belief of the truth; whereunto he calls them, by the gospel to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ."* These are the persons spoken of in the text, as "given unto Christ" by some mysterious transaction (according to our low apprehensions) betwixt the Father and the Son, when he undertook the work of redemption. With an especial intention of their Salvation he shed his blood, "I lay down" says he "my life for the sheep." His death was a *sufficient* atonement for all; and this forms an encouragement for any; and leaves all without excuse for neglecting such great Salvation, thro' pride and love of sin. But he foresaw, who would eventually partake of this infinite ransom, and for them he specially paid it. These are his, before their conversion; "other sheep," says he "I have which are not of this fold:" meaning the unconverted Gentiles. When as lost sheep, they are wandering in the ways of destruction, he sends his ministers by his providence to, and (notwithstanding the opposition of others, and their own discouragements, and purposes of removal) continues them in those places, where each resides, that by them he may seek and save them, and bring them home to his fold.— "Be not afraid, but speak and hold not thy peace, for I am with thee and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee; for I have much people in this City" saith he to persecuted Paul at Corinth, concerning

* 2 Theff. ii. 13, 14.

the licentious inhabitants.* For these he especially intercedes, and not for the world. These “God, “who is rich in mercy, for his great love where- “with he loveth them even when dead in “sin, quickens” by new creating grace, and thus makes them “a willing people in the day of “his power in the beauties of holiness” Others are invited, but they only are made willing to come; the rest make light of it and go their ways to other more favourite pursuits.—Which leads me

III. To observe, that all these shall come to Christ, and none else will.

THIS is illustrated by the decree of Cyrus to the captive Jews: † “who is there among you” says the King “of all his people, his God be with him, “and let him go up to Jerusalem.” This was general for all. But many had got comfortable settlements at Babylon, disaffected a long and dangerous journey, and cared not enough for the ashes of the holy City, to leave, venture, and endure so much for their sakes. Who then went? “All they, “whose spirit God had raised up to go:” and none else. The others might and could, had they had a willing mind, but they had not, and therefore went not. Nor would any have gone, had not God interposed to make some willing. ‡

MAY

* Acts xviii. 9, 10. † Ezra i.

‡ I gladly refer to a letter of Archbishop Usher's, for a more full discussion of this point; and for this and several other illustrations, and arguments. It may be seen in the “Theological Miscellany, for May 1786.”

I need not add that the perusal of it was peculiarly satisfactory and delightful to me: for this every one will give me credit

MAY not sinners come to Christ? How runs the proclamation? "Let him that is a-thirst come, and whosoever *will*, let him come." Ho! "every one that thirsteth, come unto the waters." "How long ye simple one's will ye love simplicity, and scorners delight in their scorning, and fools hate knowledge. Turn you at my reproof; behold, I will pour out my spirit unto you." "Seek the Lord, while he may be found, call upon him while he is near, let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy on him, and to our God, and he will abundantly pardon."* "Now as Ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us, we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled unto God." "We beseech you, that you receive not the grace of God in vain."† Who is excepted by name or character from these general proclamations? Christ complains of men, "that they will not come to him, that they might have life;" pathetically says of Jerusalem. "How often *would* I have gathered thy children, as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not." Jehovah confirms it with

credit, when I observe, that I found those views, which I had long possessed, and which many had condemned as novel, and singular, fully maintained by one, of such established reputation for Learning, Orthodoxy and Piety.

* Isaiah lv. 6, 7.

† 2 Cor. vth, and vith chapters.

an

an oath, that he hath no pleasure in the death of the wicked, “but rather that the wicked turn from his way, and live. Turn ye, turn ye, “why will ye die?” Justice indeed demands the execution of the criminal: But the merciful Prince, as it were, sheds tears, whilst as a matter of necessity, (if he will maintain the honour of his kingdom), he signs the death warrant. And the reason of the destruction of sinners is this: — “Because I have called, and ye refused, I have stretched forth my hands, and no man regarded; but ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof, I also will laugh at your calamity, and mock when your fear cometh.”

BUT perhaps they cannot. This is true, if truly understood. 'Tis a moral, not a natural inability. Is this distinction useless, and unintelligible? Is there no difference then betwixt a covetous wretch, who with a full purse hath no heart; and a compassionate man, who hath no money to relieve a fellow-creature in distress? Both are effectually prevented, but the one from himself, the other by an external hindrance. Every heart at once indignantly condemns the one, and wholly justifies the other. Stript of all false colouring; the one could if he would, and the other would if he could. Our God *cannot* lye. Wherefore? Not through external restraint, but through the perfection of his essential holiness. Satan cannot but hate his Maker. Wherefore?

Not

Not because of outward force, but through the horrid malignity of his disposition.*

SINNERS

* If there be no real difference betwixt the want of natural faculties, and the want of moral dispositions; there can be nothing culpable even in Satan's opposing God, and endeavouring the destruction of men; for it is as impossible at least that he should do otherwise, as that sinners should perfectly obey the Law, or of themselves repent, and believe the Gospel: And if they are excusable, Satan is consequently so too. Indeed, on this supposition, all characters are reduced to a level; for in proportion to the degree of evil-disposition, or moral inability to good, evil actions become excusable; and by parity of reason, in proportion to the degree of moral excellency of disposition, or of moral inability to evil, good actions being unavoidable, become less praise-worthy. Thus, the more inwardly holy any man is, the less esteem is his piety, justice and charity, entitled to; for he *can* scarce do otherwise. An Angel (as confirmed in holiness) is still less entitled to commendation; for in *some sense* it is impossible he should do otherwise than be holy: He *cannot* sin. And through *necessary* excellency of nature, it is strictly impossible God should do any thing inconsistent with the most consummate wisdom, justice, truth and goodness. He *cannot*: And shall we say, this inability (which is the incommunicable glory of his nature) renders him less entitled to our admiring, adoring grateful love, than otherwise he would be?

Every body sees what confusion would be introduced into civil and domestic concerns, if no regard were paid to this distinction, and an inveterate propensity were allowed as an excuse for crimes. No less would it introduce into all our discourses on divine things: As it runs directly counter to all our rules of judging of characters and actions. A good outward action without the least correspondent disposition, is in reality mere hypocrisy: As the disposition to good, and aversion to evil encreases, good actions have more genuine *sincerity*, and the character more amiableness. When we can say with the Apostles, "We *cannot* but do," so, and so—we are entitled to as much esteem and approbation, as mere men can be. And as this moral inability to evil, is much stronger in Angels, and the spirits of just men made perfect,

SINNERS cannot be *willing* to stoop so low, and leave so much, to part with every lust, and renounce the world and deny themselves, and bear their cross, and follow Christ; and without this willingness, they cannot be his Disciples. This is the real, and only hindrance. Were they once willing, they would ask, and God would give them all the rest.

COME they not because these blessings were not intended for them? No man out of Hell knows this; and but few habitually think it. God's secret purposes, and open declarations, perfectly coincide: "But secret things belong unto the Lord our God, and the things, which are revealed to us;" (a distinction not enough attended to): the former are not, nor can be, the rule of our conduct, but the latter are; which exclude none, but those who will not come to the

we are taught to look forward to such a holy estate and temper as the summit of our wishes and desires. And God himself who being under no restraint, but doing his whole pleasure, cannot but be perfectly, and unchangeably holy in all he doeth; is proposed as the object of supreme love, admiring gratitude and adoring praise.

On the other hand, a bad action, if done without intention, or the least disposition to such moral evil, would be deemed purely accidental, not culpable. When contrary to general disposition and character, and the effect of *sudden temptation*, it is considered as more venial, than when the effect of a rooted disposition. And for a criminal to plead, I am so prone to theft and cruelty, that I *could not* help it, would be to condemn himself as the vilest miscreant not fit to live, in the opinion of Judge, jury and spectators.

There can be no difficulty in proving that this distinction is implied throughout the Bible; and has its foundation in the
nature

the Gospel-feast. † Esau sold his birth-right for one morsel of meat: God intended not that birth-right for Esau, but for Jacob: But this, not being the motive of Esau's conduct, forms no excuse for it: He is condemned in Scripture as profane, and a despiser of his birth-right, an example of one, who repented not 'till it was too late, and a warning for us. Proud contempt of a free Salvation, over-valuation of earthly blessings, and profane disregard for spiritual blessings, are the real motives of men's rejecting the Gospel; and therefore no unknown purpose of God, is allowed as any excuse. 'Tis true, the Elect were of the same disposition, and would have made the same choice, if left to themselves: Therefore boasting is excluded, and God appears glorious in Justice, in condemning Sinners, but more glorious in Grace in saving Believers.

WE read afterwards, " No man can come unto
" me, except the Father that hath sent me *draw*

nature of things; and so far from being novel, it is impossible that a rational creature can be unacquainted with it. No man ever yet *missed* the distinction between the sick servant who could not, and the lazy servant, who had no heart to his work: that is betwixt natural and moral inability.

But human nature must be laid low, and Grace exalted. Which lays human nature lowest? To rank him among the brutes, who have no power; or among infernal spirits, who have no disposition to love, and serve God? Or which most exalts Grace? to save a wretch, who could not help those crimes, for which he is condemned to Hell: Or to save a rebel, who *willingly* was an enemy to his Maker, and persisted in that *enmity*, 'till Almighty power, by a new creation, overcame his obstinacy, and made him willing to be reconciled?

† Matthew xxii. 1.

“ him.—They shall be all taught of God; every
 “ man therefore, that hath heard and learned of the
 “ Father, cometh to me.” We here see how this other-
 “ wise insurmountable hindrance is removed. They
 are drawn by rational inducements, nor forced by
 external violence: And this drawing is by the com-
 munication, not of new faculties, but new discove-
 ries, and dispositions, which give a new direction to
 the judgment, desires, inclinations, and affections.
 They are taught of God, and learn of the Father,
 who both opens the eyes of their understanding,
 takes the veil from their heart, and causes his light
 to shine upon them, and within them. After long
 patience with them, and preserving them during their
 ungodly course of life; perhaps when they are
 grown more determined in wickedness than ever,
 and one would think nigh unto destruction; by
 his holy Spirit he shews them his glorious majesty,
 and holiness, and their relations and obligations to
 him; and the authority, extent, and reasonableness
 of his law: * “ Convinces them of sin, of righte-
 “ ousness, and of judgement;” and lays open the
 eternal world to their view, in all its tremendous
 importance: thus they are alarmed at their danger,
 tremble at his word, and are warned to flee from
 the wrath to come. Their terror is accompanied
 by humiliation, and penitent remorse, when he
 teaches them the sinfulness of sin, and the vileness
 of their conduct and character. All reformation

* I mean not to limit the extent of this important text:
 Among *other things* it certainly means, convincing men of
 their guilt, of God's justice in his threatnings, and of the
 certain execution of them at the Day of Judgment, on the
 Prince of this world, and all his subjects.

and

and amendment prove utterly insufficient, whilst he shews them how even their best righteousness is mixed with sin. Whilst others, after awakenings, take shelter in this refuge of lyes, they are taught to exclaim, "We are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags." Thus by despair of atoning for the past, or justifying themselves before a holy God, by such unholy services, they are made willing for a free Salvation.

YET personal holiness they discover to be absolutely necessary; for they are taught that "the Lord is a God, that can have no pleasure in iniquity:" Nor can a sinner be meet for a holy heaven, and the enjoyment of a holy God, without conformity to his holiness. Thus they are preserved from that fatal refuge of lyes, (into which love of sin betrays numbers,) of perverting the doctrines of grace into a reason for being satisfied in the neglect of holiness. At the same time they are taught of God their own utter inability to obtain this holiness, but from him, and learn to prize sanctification by the spirit, as highly as redemption by the blood of Christ. These important concerns occupying their hearts, worldly objects seem diminished, and they are taught comparatively to despise them, and count them as nothing in comparison of the Salvation of their souls; and thus they become willing to deny themselves, forsake all, and follow Christ, bearing their Cross: Whilst others perish in the vain attempt of serving God, and Mammon; and reconciling the interests of time and eternity.

AND thus, the hindrances being removed, they easily learn under such a teacher the grand lesson of all; without which all others were useless, and to

which all else are subordinate. We must mention one thing before another ; but I mean not to determine in what order these lessons shall be taught, or whether more speedily, or more gradually. But in his own time and manner, the divine Spirit shall teach every elect person, the nature, truth, and glory of the Gospel of Christ. Shall shew him that in the divine Saviour, in his righteousness, sacrifice, intercession, and grace, is all he wants, or can desire. Now he feels an ardent longing for an interest in Christ, and all his blessings, fears nothing so much as being rejected, but makes (trembling perhaps) his earnest application. "Behold he prayeth !" As a condemned criminal, a perishing sinner, he comes, he applies, he waits, he persists in waiting and praying ; and giving up every other hope says, "Lord to whom shall I go, thou hast the words of eternal life." Now he respects every instruction, observes every direction, uses every means, watches against every sin, attends to every duty : yet trusts in nothing but in the free mercy of God thro' the redemption of his Son ; whom now he desires "to be made unto him, 'Wisdom and righteousness, and sanctification, and 'redemption". Now he is very apt to suspect that his mode of application is not right, becomes jealous of himself lest he should be misled ; and tho' he longs for relief from the burden of his guilt, yet he fears losing his distress improperly ; and still seeks for more earnestness, and deeper humiliation. Thus he will take no denial, yield to no discouragement, and be satisfied with nothing short of ALL that Christ died to purchase, and is exalted to bestow : Pardon, righteousness, holiness, liberty
victory

victory, and eternal life. Thus shall all, whom the Father hath given unto Christ, being taught, and drawn of him, come unto him. And is this our experience, or is it not? It is for substance, tho' with circumstantial variations, I trust, the experience of all true Christians: And yet I fear many, who are zealous for orthodox doctrines, are strangers to this method of coming day by day to Christ for his complete Salvation. I proceed

IV. To observe that Christ will most certainly receive all, who come unto him. This is here most emphatically declared, "him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out;" and perhaps the double negation in the original is yet more expressive. Had the vilest sinner, who ever trembled at the desperate apprehensions of having sinned beyond all reach of mercy, been allowed to draw up a clause for his own encouragement in coming to the Saviour; he could scarce have worded it more favourably. Imagine the basest character, which ever disgraced humanity, and scourged the world; one grown hoary in multiplied rapines, murders, Adulteries, Rapes, and unnatural lusts; and breathing out perjuries and blasphemies, as if ambitious of pre-eminence in prophaneness: Yet should even this man truly come to Christ, "he will in no wise cast him out." Suppose the most consummate villainy, to the very verge of life, carried on under the broad vizard of designed hypocrisy: or some wretch, emboldened in sin by the very Gospel itself, had given such scandal, that thousands in hell should curse him as the occasion of their perdition; or some vile apostate, or some Judas, who has betrayed, and sold their Lord.

I say,

I say, if such really come to Christ, as hath been described he will, he can in no "wise cast him out." He cannot; not from a natural, but a moral inability. He *cannot* deny himself; "He cannot alter the word, that is gone out of his lips" I argue not that such persons probably will, or actually do come; for "there is a sin unto death" and "'tis impossible to renew some unto repentance." But did they come, even at the last hour, they should "in no wise be cast out." Should there then be one present, who is ready to despair, and trembles to approach the mercy seat, because he expects, and dreads a repulse; let him make trial, and plead the promise, and wait the Lord's time in his way; and he shall find, that neither aggravated guilt, nor strong corruptions, nor inveterate evil habits, shall exclude him from this full Salvation.

Nor has any man occasion to enquire previously, whether he be elect, (for 'tis impossible to know that :) He need only ask himself; am I sincerely willing to be saved from sin, and all it's consequences in the humbling, self-denying method of the Gospel? Believing that Jesus alone is able thus to save me, do I apply to him, and trust in him for these things? And am I so willing, as to observe his directions, and use the means he hath appointed for that end? Every approach to a temper and conduct so opposite to corrupt nature; must be from some kind or degree of influence from the holy Spirit. But as many promising appearances are blighted, and the Scripture speaks of such as "had been partakers of the holy Ghost," and

“and had tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come; who yet fall away:” We are constrained to admit that not every operation of the holy Ghost, is that good work, which distinguishes the chosen people of God.—Nay probably few perish, where the word of God is preached, without many awakenings, many fears, many desires, and feeble endeavours, which are all subdued, and extinguished through the love of sin. “Many thus seek to enter in, and shall not be able.” Yet as far as there is any tendency to good in them, they are to be ascribed to a good cause: and not only stifling conscience, but “resisting the holy Ghost” will be found amongst the aggravations of sin in those that perish, at the day of Judgment.

NOR are those, who are saved, free from the same guilt: but in them grace proves victorious; and though resisted, by invincible efficacy gains the ascendancy. This distinguishing work of God, will in time shew itself, and make it evident that the man was drawn and taught of God in coming to Christ. Hence, when all are invited, none will come, but they who are willing: none are willing, but as made willing of God: He makes none willing, but the elect: he would have all encouraged, who are willing: He will have all sinners left without excuse: None can know his election, but by his vocation; nor his vocation, until he hath actually come to Christ: There is therefore no way to answer these ends, but by a free invitation. You otherwise quench the smoking flax, and break the bruised reed; for the trembling sinner may say
if

if any poor sinner, may not come if he *will*, how may I know that I may? For I know not that I am elect: But if any may come, I may; and now I am heartily willing, and this gives me encouragement. Many are zealous for a system, who understand not the argument: But he that does, will allow that this is the very knot of the whole controversy; who makes a man willing to be saved in the method of the Gospel? * If any natural preferable disposition, or any improvement of nature contribute to produce this willingness, then Arminianism must be so far true, and boasting introduced. But if God alone produce this willingness without any help, and notwithstanding every hindrance from nature; then Calvinism is thus far true, and boasting is excluded. Do not mistake me. Notions in the head, do not always suitably influence the heart and conduct. And many Arminians, are far enough from boasting, are remarkably pious and humble: And too many Calvinists are haughty, dogmatical, censorious, and contentious. But a humble believer in Jesus is a brother, and entitled to our love, though he cannot subscribe to our creed.

However this being the real question, it has nothing in it that militates against such invitations: for we only invite them to come, when *willing*, not before. My Brethren, if you are thus willing,

* I say, in the method of the gospel: For every man is willing to be saved from misery, and made happy, if it may but be, in some way of his own, either favourable to his pride or to the love of sin: But God will not save any man in his own way, who rejects God's way.

go boldly to the throne of Grace, and you shall find mercy, and grace: But if any of you are not willing, raise no slander against Christ, nor blame his unwillingness, but your own.—I proceed then

V. To observe that Christ's commission reacheth to the infallible and everlasting Salvation of the body and soul of every individual, who are given to him, see him, and believe on him, "This is the Will of him, that sent me, that of all, that he hath given me, I should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last day. And this is the Will of him, that sent me, that every one that seeth the Son, and believeth on him should have everlasting life, and I will raise him up at the last day" Indeed this conclusively follows from all that hath been already discoursed: As also from the unchangeable wisdom, faithfulness and love of God: from his oath and covenant, and many other things, which I am constrained to omit. "Whom he foreknew, them did he also predestinate, to be conformed to the image of his Son. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called; and whom he called them he also justified, and whom he justified, them he also glorified. What shall we say then to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him freely give us all things? Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? Who shall separate us from the love of Christ. For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present,

“nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor
 “any other creature shall be able to separate us
 “from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our
 “Lord.” * To object here, that though nothing
 else can, our own Sin may, is saying nothing; for
 nothing hath any tendency to separate betwixt
 Christ and the Believer but sin, or as powerfully
 tempting to sin. Our Lord says “my sheep hear
 “my voice, and I know them, and they follow me,
 “and I give unto them eternal life, and they shall
 “never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of
 “my hand. My Father who gave them me, is
 “greater than all, and none is able to pluck them
 “out of my Father’s hand. I and my Father are
 “one.” † Now Satan, nor any other enemy, can
 only endeavour to pluck the sheep out of Christ’s
 hand by tempting them to wilful Apostacy. But
 in this attempt, every enemy must be unsuccessful,
 according to these Promises. Otherwise these, and
 all those other numerous Scriptures, which are cal-
 culated to give a strong consolation to them, who flee
 for refuge to Christ, not providing against this only
 danger, mean just nothing at all.

What though many Apostatize! Who can be
 answerable for their preceeding sincerity? “They
 “went out from us, because they were not of us,”
 says one Apostle. “There must be heresies” (false
 teachers, and false doctrines) “that they that are
 “approved may be made manifest,” says another.
 Doth this sound harsh? Far am I from thinking it
 applicable to all, who decline in their profession.
 Suppose them not apostates, but backsliders. Can

* Rom. viii

† John x. 27—30.

we positively say, this man dies impenitent? Such decisions belong to God, not us. To be sure, if a professor run into notorious sin, or throw up his religion, and live and die impenitent, he will perish: For only he, “who continueth unto the end shall be saved.” The doctrine of final perseverance is not concerned in this case: The only question is: Whether God hath not in his word engaged to preserve all true believers from thus finally departing from him?

EXCEPT a man be truly converted he can only persevere in sin, or hypocrisy. Except he hath scriptural evidence of his conversion, he cannot warrantably conclude any thing concerning his perseverance. If a Professor be living in habitual sin, and encourages himself *in* such a course by this doctrine, he dreadfully presumes. But the true christian habitually and sincerely abiding in Christ, and walking in all his ordinances and commandments; in the midst of his sharp conflicts with corruption and temptation, and his fears of future consequences, may find here a reviving cordial to refresh his drooping spirits, and renew his strength; from the assurance that Christ will make him at length more than conqueror, and “preserve him from every evil work unto his heavenly Kingdom.”

THE stony ground hearers, however flourishing, having no root in themselves, must one day wither away. The ground overgrown with thorns (the worldly professor) will bear no fruit to perfection. But the seed, which falls in good ground (an honest and good heart, made such by divine grace) will bring forth fruit with *Patience*. Whosoever drink-

eth of the water, which Christ shall give him (even his holy spirit) shall *never* thirst, but the water which he will give him, shall be *in him* a well of water, springing up into everlasting life. Springing up in all holy affections, and flowing forth in all holy thoughts, words and actions, until it issues in eternal glory. The real christian will be far from thinking he has attained : still as a poor Sinner he has cause for daily exercise of repentance and Faith ; daily need of the free mercy of the Father, and the precious blood of the Son, and fresh supplies of the grace of the Spirit ; every day he has occasion for watchfulness, and prayer : Oft he needs reproof and chastisement : Seasons of slackness, and instances of transgression he has to mourn over : and if he step farther out of the way ; “whom “ the Lord loves he rebukes and chastens,” and in this manner, together with his fear put into the heart, he brings them back with weeping and supplication. The final perseverance of all, who hold certain doctrines, relate certain experiences, or make a creditable profession, cannot be made to consist with matter of fact. But the final perseverance of the true penitent believer in Christ, who is delivered from the dominion of sin ; who through faith in Christ hath in some degree overcome the world, and aspires after a more complete victory ; who has learned to hate all sin, and delight in the law of God ; and is hungry and thirsting after righteousness ; is doubtless a truth of Gods word. Yea without a peradventure, the meanest, feeblest true believer on earth shall infallibly be kept by the power of God, through faith unto salvation. “For
“ this

“ this is the will of him that sent me, that of all
 “ whom he hath given me I should lose nothing,
 “ but should raise it up at the last day.”

AND this leads me to the

VI. Thing to be considered. That all this is perfectly consistent with many things which some Calvinists in our days object to as Arminian. I am surprised to hear even some Calvinists in doubt whether their principles be consistent with the government of the world by rewards, and punishments proposed as motives to the hopes and fears of mankind. Surely if the Bible do in any part teach those doctrines which are denominated Calvinism, they must implicitly pervade every part: and we can have no occasion to have recourse to an opposite scheme, to account for any part of the divine volume. For what reason can any one suppose that punishment is less justly merited upon this scheme than the other? God's fore-knowledge, or secret purpose is not the effective cause, or inducing motive of any mans rebellion, impenitence, or rejection of the gospel; and therefore can form no excuse for them, nor render his condemnation less just. His decree deprives no man of any thing good, which he either possessed, or merited; nor puts any *evil* disposition into his heart: but merely leaves the sinner to himself; without any efficacious, invincible, unmerited interposition, to prevent him from destroying himself by his voluntary wickedness and obstinacy: and he must go far indeed from the whole scheme of christianity; who supposes the reward of a believing sinner is *merited*: The Arminian, if not also a Socinian (or nearly so) must allow with the Calvinists, that it is
 a reward

a reward not of debt, but of Grace. Fear of future punishment, yea and hope of future reward, (tho' blind and presumptuous) answer, even in those, who eventually perish, important purposes in God's Providence: exactly the same upon one scheme as the other. Upon neither scheme are they effectually for the Salvation of the wicked: Upon either they keep^{as} the world in some measure of order, and prevent much wickedness. What a world would it be, were all the wicked entirely without fears of future punishment, or wholly desperate? And the Lord in calling his Elect, and preserving them, draws them on, and effects his purposes of love, in a considerable degree, by means of their hopes and fears of future happiness, or misery.

WHAT then is there in this inconsistent with charging guilt upon every man's conscience: warning men to flee from the wrath to come: laying open the law as the ministration of condemnation: Calling upon them to repent and believe the Gospel: Exhorting them to labour for the meat, which endureth unto everlasting life; to strive to enter in at the strait gate, to search the Scripture, to pray, to press into the kingdom of Heaven, to forsake their sins, and be separate from sinners? These are the appointed means, which, in all ages have been owned of God for the conviction of sinners: And though, without supernatural Grace, they prove insufficient to overcome man's strong corruption: Yet they are suitable means: As suitable as ploughing and sowing, to procure the crop; though here also God alone can give the increase: So suitable, that in the mouth
of

of the prisoner Paul, they made even a proud Felix tremble; and an Agrippa almost persuaded to be a Christian.

WHAT is there in all this not consistent with inviting sinners to come to Christ: With warning them not to neglect such great Salvation, nor to refuse him that speaketh: With declaring that it shall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah, than for those, who reject the Gospel? What is there inconsistent with exhorting men to examine whether they be in the Faith: To take heed that no man fail of the Grace of God: to give diligence, to make their calling and election sure: and to be careful that no man deceive them, and that they do not deceive themselves? What inconsistent with distinguishing between the true Christian, and the false Professor: with exhorting Christians to adorn their profession, to glorify God, to let their light shine before men; to be faithful in the unrighteous Mammon; to redeem their time; to walk circumspectly; to beware of growing negligent; to press forward, and to be ready to every good work? What inconsistent with declaring that "hereby we know the Children of God, and the Children of the Devil." "Every one that doeth not righteousness, is not of God." "Every one that committeth sin is of the Devil?"

FINALLY, What is there inconsistent with discoursing to *Christians* very particularly concerning the Christian temper and walk; concerning relative duties, and all other duties; and admonishing, persuading, reproving, beseeching, exhorting them in every method, and by every motive,

motive, "to walk worthy of God, who hath called them to his kingdom and glory?" There must be a vast disadvantage in arguing against these things, which are so fully handled in the Scriptures, and naturally are expressed in Scripture terms. And if we are proved inconsistent in these things, we have this consolation, that every penman of the sacred Scriptures will share the same censure. But in one word: Are means, any part of God's plan? * If they are not: The argument not only concludes against practical preaching, but against *all* preaching: And we may as sensibly give over ploughing our fields, eating our food, and taking medicine. † But if means, as well as ends, are provided for in the divine counsels; then Calvinism forms as firm a foundation for all exhortations, instructions, warnings, invitations, and expostulations of the

* That is to say: Did God predestinate the end, with or without reference to the means, by which he intended to accomplish the end?

† Saint Paul was assured, in a vision, that the lives of every individual, who sailed with him, should be preserved: Yet afterwards, he declares as positively, "That except the seamen continued in the ship, they could not be saved." Acts xxvii. Was the event then doubtful? Was there any alteration in the purpose of God? Was the Apostle inconsistent? Or did the passengers act rationally, when, without hesitation, or any accusation of the Apostle, as inconsistent, they went and cut the cords, and let the boat fall into the sea, thus defeating the sailors intention?

This was (as a friend observed to me) common sense, which is a very different thing from the vain reasonings of men in matters of religion. The truth is, God determined to save their lives; but in this precise manner, and no other; and the means were as infallibly decreed, as the event.

preacher:

preacher: And all diligence, and watchfulness; and activity of the hearer, as the opposite doctrine. I shrewdly suspect a firmer; for I shall hardly be convinced that error subserves holy practice, and truth subverts it. Indeed, upon the Calvinistical plan; besides the native tendency of these means, there appears a more close connection of the means with the blessing; from the consideration of God's both appointing them, and promising the blessing, and inclining the heart to use them.

AND now by way of application

I. I Meet a very common objection. If you really believe these doctrines of Election and final Perseverance, why do you preach them so sparingly, cautiously, and practically? Let the objector read St. Paul's Epistles, and answer the objection himself. Hath there been a less proportion of these doctrines in my Sermons than in his Epistles? And doth he not as carefully guard them from abuse, and connect them as much with holy practice as I do? A few verses in an Epistle upon these doctrines, a much larger proportion upon the person, love, and sufferings of Christ, and Faith in him: whole chapters upon a holy life and conversation. And if we do not thus proportion, guard and connect them, hypocrites will abuse them, infidels will despise them, and the weak will be stumbled by them. Nor are they at all proper subjects for addresses to sinners, prejudiced hearers, or newly-awakened persons: And I seldom find them in Scripture in this connection. Nor is this human prudence: Christ says, "I have many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now:"

G

And

And Paul to some, who had as good an opinion of themselves, as any now have. "I could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal. I have fed you with milk, and not with meat, for ye were not able to bear it; neither yet are ye now able:" And gives a reason, which proves that many in our Congregations are not able: Namely the prevalence of strife, and contention among them. * †

THE

* 1 Cor. ii. See also 2 Peter iii. 16.

† I am rather surprized to find the same objection urged by many against "The Discourse upon Repentance;" and that it hath been condemned as Arminianism, chiefly, I suppose, because it hath nothing in it *explicitly*, concerning Election, or final Perseverance. They, who do not see that the Author is a Calvinist, have either read the book without much attention, or have very different ideas of Calvinism, than those contained in this Sermon. Whoever will carefully peruse pages 72, 73, 2d Edition, in note page 107; and p. 108, 109, 110, will, if he have a ready discernment, see that the Author was a Calvinist, though he never expressly treats on those doctrines. Nor can any one sentence be produced inconsistent with *those* views, stated in this Sermon. But *Repentance* was the subject of that Discourse; and I chose to keep close to the subject. It was mainly intended for the use of persons, (with numbers of whom I had some acquaintance) that were totally ignorant of Gospel doctrines: not for those who are established in them. To write a plain awakening discourse, suited to teach ignorant people the way to Heaven, was the grand object (tho' subordinate ends were also aimed at): And looking upon those doctrines "not as milk, but strong meat, not for babes, but for those, who are of full age, and by reason of use, have their senses exercised to discern good and evil," I said nothing explicitly about them: Judging, according to Mr. Whitfield's expression, "that men should go to the Grammar School of Repentance and Faith, before they go to the University of Predestination and Election." As I have very authentic evidence that God hath blessed that

Discourse

THE truth is, many would scarce hear any thing else: And though I firmly believe the doctrines, and should be glad for all real Christians to have the comfort of them: Yet, when they are *dis-jointed* from their practical influence, they form in my judgment a very small part of Christianity. And if God will but bless the word to bring men to repentance, faith and holiness, a Christian hope, temper, and conduct; we shall in general find it no hard matter to convince them that this is the fruit of electing love, and the sure earnest of eternal glory. And if a few see not their privilege here, they will eternally rejoice in it hereafter.

II. God's secret purposes are consistent with his revealed declaration: let then no sinner vainly endeavour to excuse his sins, or quiet his conscience by these doctrines. Though the Salvation of the righteous be wholly of the Lord; the damnation of the wicked is wholly of themselves. And if the lustre of these truths dazzles the eyes of some poor distressed soul, some weak Believer, or Enquirer—Let them turn their eyes to another part of divine

Discourse to the good of souls; I have ventured to insert this apology, that a prejudice on that account may not prevent further usefulness. Every Christian man has his gift, and manner of aiming to do good; and it would be well, if we could but try to serve the common cause according to our own judgment and conscience, and leave others the same liberty: Remembering “that he who is not *against us*, is on “our part.” I would just further observe, that though the Epistle to the Romans, and that to the Ephesians, have in them *much* upon these deep points; yet several, even of Paul's Epistles, have but little explicitly. And I would wish the candid Reader to peruse them all, with this design; to observe the proportion these doctrines bear to the other parts.

truth. Still, still it is true, "that every one that
 "asketh receiveth, and he that knocketh shall be opened,"
 "and to him that knocketh it shall be opened."

III. How careful should we be to ascertain the reality of our conversion, before we take the comfort of perseverance! An error in this matter, proves fatal to thousands; who mistaking some transient emotions, and affections for true Grace, bolster up their hopes to the end, by abusing these truths, and perish with a lye in their right hand.

IV. THE native tendency of these doctrines, (being completely to exclude boasting, and to lead us to ascribe all the glory of contriving, preparing, revealing and applying Salvation wholly to God the Father, Son, and holy Ghost; thus influencing to deeper humiliation, and inspiring livelier gratitude, than any other scheme,) forms their chief excellency. Did we really live under their influence, we could never despise others, or admire, and prefer ourselves; nor be angry with such as differed from us. Indeed we should in meekness instruct those, who oppose themselves: we might argue, persuade and exhort them; because these are the means God hath appointed, and we may hope for his blessing on them: But "as the wrath of
 "man worketh not the righteousness of God;" we certainly should never slander, revile, or contend with acrimony; or hold up an opponent to derision, and contempt, whilst with an air of conscious superiority ("as if we had made ourselves to differ") we plume ourselves and our party on pre-eminent discernment, if not integrity: For these are none of the means God hath appointed, nor can we
 expect

expect a blessing on them ; nor can they do any credit to the cause.

TAKE heed therefore that your zeal for the doctrine do not lead you into a spirit, and conduct diametrically opposite to that humility, compassion, meekness, and gentleness, which it is calculated to inspire.—If Calvinists will dispute with acrimony ; pass hard censures, or spread slanderous reports about others ; judge another man's servant, and be quarrelsome and implacable ; to be sure their doctrine is not to blame, nor their belief of it : But their want of more grace, if they have got any. Yet the cause will suffer, and the doctrines will be blamed for the misconduct of the professor. And one moderate peaceable man, who loves and is kind to all christians without respect of party, and adorns his profession by a holy life, will do more to propagate the doctrine, than twenty angry disputants, who humour the pride of their own party, and prejudice and disgust all others, “ put on therefore as the
“ elect of God ; holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness,
“ long suffering ; forbearing one another and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any ; even as Christ forgave you, so
“ also do ye.”

FINALLY, my Brethren, if you have attained to a scriptural assurance of your calling and Election : give diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end : remember from what a dreadful state you are so wonderfully delivered : How free to you this deliverance ; what a price it cost your Redeemer ; what he hath done for you, and prepared for you : and while you rejoice in the Lord,
rejoice

rejoice in your tribulations, rejoice in the hope of the glory of God, in all your conflicts and temptations. Let the Love of Christ constrain you to live no longer to yourselves, but to him, who died for you, and rose again. Be ye therefore steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord; forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.

F I N I S.

BY THE SAME AUTHOR,

And at the same Places may be had,

1. THE FORCE OF TRUTH;

A N

AUTHENTIC NARRATIVE

Price Two Shillings.

2. A DISCOURSE ON REPENTANCE.

Price 1s. or 10s. a Dozen.

E R R A T A.

Page 28, line 11 of the note, for *venal*, read *venial*; p. 28. l. 11, for *nor*, read *or*; p. 42, l. 2, for *effectually*, read *effectual*.

